Foreword by the Vice Chancellor

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh’s Strategic Plan 2014-2020. The Plan is the product of the hard work of many faculty and staff. Together they have reviewed local and global directions and trends in higher education and sought to synthesize them into a practical working road map for the future of ULAB.

The Strategic Plan sets out the directions that we wish to take in the next six years in order to become the highest ranked private university in Bangladesh. The Plan is the first step in achieving this ambition. It is now up to ULAB’s faculty and staff to ensure this occurs by translating our aims and objectives into achievable goals for all academic and administrative units of the University.

Professor Imran Rahman
Vice Chancellor
Introduction: The Growing Vision

In 2004 the University of Liberal Arts (ULAB) was created on the model of the American liberal arts system, thereby setting itself apart from the majority of private and public universities in Bangladesh. These differences have been articulated in its vision and its mission statement, where it is stated unequivocally that ULAB will...

ULAB has grown from around 400 students in 2004 to just under 4000 in 2013. A clear induction of success in a highly competitive market. However, while growth is important to the university it is not the only criterion of success. As a liberal arts university, ULAB strives to improve its profile in all areas: curriculum, administration, recruitment of well-qualified Faculty, and co-curricular activities. As the university enters its second decade it is appropriate that its academic programs to be subjected rigorous scrutiny in order to both evaluate its current performance and plan improvement for the future.

With this in mind, it was decided that a new strategic plan was required, covering the period 2014 to 2020. A representative committee of key stakeholders in ULAB’s future was formed, comprising members of the professoriate as well as administrative staff. It was charged with devising a strategic plan for submission to the university’s Board of Trustees that would be the basis of development and growth over the next seven years. The committee met for two days in a retreat at the BRAC campus at Savar and considered the planning documentation provided by the Office of Academic Development.

After extensive discussions the committee agreed that the university should adopt a three part strategy for development and growth. The three strands of the strategy are Teaching and Learning, Research and Engagement. Under these headings a university wide plan was devised, which will govern the direction ULAB in the future, which in turn will be translated into Action Plans by the key units within the university – the academic departments, the research centers, and the core administrative units. In adopting this trickle down model it is planned that the growth of ULAB will occur in a structured and logical manner.

The three major themes were decided upon after long debate. Teaching and Learning is pre-eminent because it is thought that in the context of Bangladesh an institution is judged by the community on the quality of its teaching. ULAB has long recognized this with its Active Learning programs and the Strategic Plan seeks to consolidate this approach as a core activity. The philosophy behind the decision was simply that quality active teaching makes learning not only more attractive but easier for students. Thus active learning and teaching will become central to all curriculum development at the university and a number of stratagems and techniques will be introduce
to ensure that all teaching initiatives in the future will be within an active learning framework.

ULAB emphasizes good teaching because it encourages active learning. To ensure that ULAB gains and maintains its reputation as an institution known for its good teaches a number of strategies are required. By these means ULAB will attract the students it seeks to enroll and thereafter provide them with a memorable learning experience whose influence will extend beyond the student's formal education. At the core of this teaching and learning experience is a curriculum that is relevant, innovative and meets the needs of young enquiring minds and at the same time satisfies national demands for a quality education. The curriculum will be subject to constant revisions that reflect the changing relationship between technology and the classroom and trends in international education.

ULAB recognizes that good teaching is ultimately based on the research profile of faculty. Good research leads to good teaching. Consequently ULAB has introduced a Research Plan with the aim to create and maintain a research culture that infuses all teaching and learning. The research plan encourages researchers to pursue their specific interests and specializations and at the same time meets the research agenda of a developing nation such as Bangladesh. The ULAB Faculty Manual is attached (See appendix 1).

ULAB is also committed to engaging with the public sphere, both nationally and internationally. The university has a firm belief that its mission, that encompasses sustainability and active learning, should be shared on a broader front and not just confined to the university. To achieve widespread engagement with a number of communities ULAB has developed a number of strategies that encourage outreach and enhance engagement.

To achieve these outcomes ULAB has developed a model of education that is sensitive to the needs of the students and supportive of national outcomes in higher education in Bangladesh

The Plan

Faculty, departments, centers and divisions action plans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major thread</th>
<th>Enabler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>KPIs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principal Aims and Objectives

By 2020 ULAB will be able to claim that:

- It attracts Bangladesh’s top students to its courses;
- It is an acknowledged regional leader in the field of curriculum development;
- It attracts highly qualified faculty who are leaders in their respective fields to teach and conduct research;
- It is a leading research institution in the region with acknowledged expertise in selected areas;
- It provides outstanding tuition to its students;
- It is responsive to community, student and national needs when introducing new courses.
1. Teaching and Learning

Strategies

By 2020 ULAB will be able to claim:

- It attracts and supports excellent students from all backgrounds but especially from English medium schools;
- It offers an attractive and distinctive curriculum;
- It delivers an outstanding students’ experience;
- It has developed an outstanding graduate education;
- It supports students in maximizing their leaning experience;
- It encourages and rewards excellence and creativity in teaching and learning

Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By 2020, ULAB will be able to claim it</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Attracts top students, based on A Level and HSC results, to its courses.</td>
<td>Commencement and completions of students reflect annual projected increases in suitable students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Achieves international recognition for the quality of its courses</td>
<td>Programs given full recognition for RPL foreign study by USA, UK, Canada and Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Achieves high level student satisfaction</td>
<td>Student satisfaction survey results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Achieves a mean 4.00 GPA per student on entry</td>
<td>Admission data reflecting selected targets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1.5 Increases student intake from leading English medium schools in Dhaka | Reflected in admissions data |
| 1.6 Achieves enrolments of at least 30% per year in Graduate Certificate of Tertiary Teaching by Faculty | Design, offer and administer Grad Cert, recording enrolments |
| 1.7 Introduces at least six new major courses between 2014 and 2020. | UGC approvals |
| 1.8 Introduces at least six new postgraduate programs | UGC approvals |
2. Research

Strategies

By 2020 ULAB will be able to claim

- It has become a regionally recognized university for the excellence of its research in a variety of disciplines;
- It is a nationally recognized center for excellence in research;
- It encourages, enables and supports research collaboration on a number of fronts;
- It has a university wide approach to creating, supporting and maintaining a research culture among its students and faculty;
- It is a university that recognizes and values excellence and diversity in all its forms thereby enhancing its research culture;
- It is a university recognized for addressing social, economic and intellectual challenges with a view to meeting societal demands thereby demonstrating the significance and impact of its research to the nation.

Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By 2020 ULAB will achieve the following targets</th>
<th>Enabler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Establish and maintain an internationally recognized research culture</td>
<td>The number of research grants obtained by faculty from both national and international grants bodies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Create an internal research infrastructure</td>
<td>Appointment of Dean of Research and Research Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Attract students wishing to undertake higher degree studies by research</td>
<td>Enrollments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Improve research productivity</td>
<td>Increased number of research grants won by faculty; improved publication record</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Engagement

Strategies

By 2020 ULAB will be able to claim it has

- Established strategic partnerships with key stakeholders in the community;
- Established public knowledge partnerships with NGOs and other bodies;
- Developed public knowledge programs that contribute to debate on important issues;
- Increased the standing of the university within the community through alliances with high-ranking international universities;
- Attract high caliber faculty from a range of countries;
- Created an active university alumni association;
- Created an internal network of engagement that works to the mutual benefit of the university community;
- Introduced a nationally recognized equity program;
- An active and well-organized co-curricular program.

Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By 2020 ULAB will achieve the following</th>
<th>Enabler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish and maintain a comprehensive program for faculty development</td>
<td>Regular workshops, retreats and seminars related to tertiary pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Contribute to public knowledge in Bangladesh in a structured way</td>
<td>Public lectures, seminars and workshops given by eminent faculty and visiting faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Increase the number of faculty with PhDs</td>
<td>Faculty lists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Create an active alumni association</td>
<td>Membership and activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Strategic Plan 2014 - 2020

#### 3.5 Create and maintain a mutually beneficial relation with the local community

**Key stakeholder managed programs**

#### 3.6 Develop and maintain an active co-curricular program

**Membership of clubs and programs of activities.**

#### 3.7 Improve the quality of cultural life at ULAB

**Through exhibitions, concerts and seminars**

### 4. Values

*The inescapable challenges of the early Twentieth Century: sustainability and resilience, and the interconnected challenges of energy, water, food and climate.*

Sir John Bridlington (UK Chief Scientific Adviser)

ULAB’s stated values underpin the vision and mission of the university. Interestingly the emphasis on sustainability pre-dates much of the interest and commitment articulated by others who have come to an awareness of its significance slowly. The values articulated by the university—Sustainability, a commitment to the Liberal Arts, transparency and integrity underwrite the unique nature of ULAB and signify its modernity. They are, in and of themselves, the best enablers through which the strategic aims of the university may be achieved.

### Enablers

#### 1. People

*A university is only as good as its people!*

**Strategies**

- Improve the university's workforce flexibility by improving opportunities for faculty to meet their academic and human potential;
- Attracting and retaining the highest quality people to the university at all levels, from peon to professor by reviewing the university’s classifications structure and system of remuneration;
- Aligning performance of individuals with priorities of the university by developing diverse career paths for faculty;
- Investing our staff and faculty y attracting high performing faculty and professional staff;
- Retain high performing faculty and professional staff with the introduction of incentive packages;
- Develop collaborative approaches to teaching, learning and research among faculty;
- Improve the security of tenure of faculty and staff by linking rewards to performance.

**Overall Target:**

*Improve quality & performance of faculty to international levels by 2020.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Create highest satisfaction rate among faculty of all Bangladesh universities.</td>
<td>Recruitment and retention of high quality faculty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Demonstrate increased diversity of faculty.</td>
<td>Increased number of women in senior ranks of the university.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 Increase the quality of the faculty.  
Alignment of teaching and research with performance.

1.4 Increased professionalism of the faculty.  
Increase in number of PhD holders at all levels.

1.5 Develop a system that rewards success.  
Provide faculty with differing career paths, namely as Teachers, Teacher Scholars or Researchers.

2. Environmental Sustainability

Strategies

ULAB will devise and implement a plan that sets targets to

- reduce energy consumption throughout the campus;
- reduce carbon emissions as a matter of urgency;
- reduce water consumption by harvesting rainwater;
- increase re-cycling through a university wide plan & waste management.

These will achieved with the implementation of a comprehensive Green Plan that

- gains international accreditation for ULAB’s sustainability programs that embed sustainable development in all teaching, learning, research and administrative practices.

Overall Target:

By 2020 ULAB will lead Bangladesh in its reduction in energy consumption and waste management by meeting all set targets.
3. Leadership and Management

Strategies

The success of the university in achieving its aims and objectives is dependent upon the quality of its leadership and management. Good leadership displays the qualities of planning, organizing, guiding and controlling all activities within the university.

Effective management fosters a university culture based on accountability, high performance, continuous improvement and innovation and rewards those who strive for excellence. Good management rewards those who successfully lead, manage and contribute to the university’s growth.

Effective management demonstrates a commitment to sustainability as a guiding principle of the university. Effective management harnesses the expertise of faculty and professional staff to achieve the goals of the university.

By 2020 ULAB will be able to claim that it has:

- Clearly defined responsibilities at all levels of management.
- Introduced new management divisions when and where necessary.
- Developed clear procedures for effective planning at all levels.
- Developed a culture of effective evidence based decision-making.
- Introduced an effective risk management program.
- Improved its performance based promotional protocols.

Overall Targets:

By 2020 ULAB will be able to claim that it has a quality leadership and management team that adheres to international best practices by:

- Maintaining transparent, efficient and effective management policies.
- Providing outstanding leadership in all professional areas.
- Creating a collaborative and coordinated approach to administration across divisional boundaries.
- Supporting rigorous planning and due diligence of all major initiatives.
- Developing effective communication strategies that allow informed decision-making across divisional boundaries.
- Introducing an effective risk management plan.
- Demonstrating a high degree of satisfaction among faculty and professional staff with the decision-making procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Develop best practice in policy formation and decision-making.</td>
<td>High level of satisfaction demonstrated by Board of Trustees and Syndicate in the management plan adopted and performance of management team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 To provide outstanding leadership at all levels of the university’s operations.</td>
<td>Recruit suitable high quality personnel to fill senior positions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Apply rigorous business financial planning criteria to all university activities.  
Successful external auditing of ULAB procedures.

3.4 Improve levels of satisfaction of university management and leadership among all university faculty and staff  
Improved performance indicators implemented.

4. Financial Sustainability

ULAB will establish and maintain a robust financial position subject to rigorous scrutiny and audits.

ULAB will maintain a fee structure commensurate with its status within the community and its long-term aims and objectives.

ULAB will actively seek alternatives sources of funds, such as sponsorship and endowment, to augment its regular fee income.

Strategies

By 2020 ULAB will have developed strategies that cover the three principal financial domains:

1. An effective Financial Management Plan that:
   - Demonstrates prudent, responsible and financial management;
   - Rigorous assessment of all requests and demands on its revenue before making decisions;
   - Demonstrates budgetary transparency;
   - Maintains commercial best practice in its financial decision-making;
   - Ensure efficiency and effectiveness in financial operations.

2. Revenue which:
   - Optimizes revenues from existing sources;

   - Develops new streams of revenue based on short courses, sponsorship and endowment;
   - Encourages and rewards successful diversification in revenue raising;
   - Maintain strategic, sustainable and diversified revenue growth.

By 2020 ULAB will have achieved significant revenue growth that aligns expenditure with revenues that can be measured by:

- Attaining 100% revenue growth on 2014 figures;
- Increasing endowments to 30% of total revenue;
- The generation of increased surpluses through careful management of existing revenue sources and additional sources.

Overall Targets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Develop at least three new revenue streams.</td>
<td>Appointment of a Financial Planning Officer within the Finance Division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Minimize expenditure by 5% per year relative to income.</td>
<td>Published budgets and introduction of an efficiency dividend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Generate increased cash flow through increased enrollments.</td>
<td>Improved Marketing program leading to increased enrollments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Nurture the Alumni Association as a source of future income with the setting of achievable targets.</td>
<td>Create an Alumni Office in Student Affairs Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Actively pursue endowments for the creation of endowed chairs etc.</td>
<td>Include in Financial Planner's remit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Infrastructure

Future Plans:

In this domain ULAB’s major strategy is to build a first-class quality green and sustainable campus that incorporates the latest in environmental, communication and educational technologies.

**Building and maintaining a first-class green campus:**

The key enabler to the future directions of ULAB is its relocation to the purpose-built Ramchandrapur Campus. The move from Dhanmondi has been mandated by the UGC and has to be carefully managed. The move raises a number of issues that have to be resolved:

- Do we move the whole university and its programs on a date to be decided or will the move been phased in over time, program by program?
- Who has ultimate responsibility for planning and implementing the move?
- How do we promote the move in a positive light to our major stakeholders?
- When a time line be created and who will manage it?

It is assumed that the design of the campus has begun and fully discussed with faculty. There is little point in expending so much time, money and effort on such a large and important project to find that critical facilities have been left out because the experts have not been consulted.

In addition it is critical that ULAB maintain a presence in Dhanmondi itself and thus Campus A should be retained, refurbished and become the major home for postgraduate programs as most postgraduate students work and Campus A remains a convenient place for them to study.

**Current Strategies:**

ULAB will continue to provide faculty, staff and students with a secure, well-managed and equipped environment in which to work and study.

To continue to upgrade IT infrastructure to above average national standards, that supports teaching and research.

To continue to provide students with a first class, secure and attractive educational environment.

Create an environment that attracts high caliber faculty to the university ranks.

Create an environment that generates student and faculty commitment the institution.
Overall Targets:

By 2020 ULAB will improve its infrastructure and equipment by:

- Providing new, high quality, purpose built learning spaces on its new campus;
- Building the new campus on time and on budget;
- Developed a built environment governed by a fully developed sustainability plan;
- Regular upgrades of technology for the teaching programs and operational management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Build and maintain a new purpose built, state-of-the-art green campus.</td>
<td>a committee to oversee the transition of ULAB from its current location to the Ramchandrapur Campus; a project manager to organize and oversee the process of transition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Complete all projects on time and on budget.</td>
<td>All financial milestones met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Manage curriculum, environment and finances in a sustainable manner.</td>
<td>Successful implementation of effective reporting systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Accountability Framework

To ensure that accountability is practiced at all university levels it is essential that faculty and staff know their role in the system and behave accordingly.

1. All reporting obligations are discharged through the Board of Trustees or their designated nominees, who are advised by the senior management of the university.
2. Ultimate authority for operations resides in the Board of Trustees who delegates responsibilities to approved officers who assume responsibility for their portfolio.
3. As far as practicable, responsibility is aligned with accountability and decision making devolved to the level best able to determine the means of implementation to achieve successful and efficient outcomes.
4. All faculty and staff with management responsibilities work to clear operational goals, performance expectations and obligations.
5. All recording responsibilities are coordinated through the office of the Pro Vice Chancellor.
6. Decisions are only taken on the basis of rigorous planning informed by detailed risk management assessment and expert review.
7. All faculty and staff with responsibilities are expected to demonstrate a strong commitment to the ongoing improvement and management of the university.

Key Elements in Achieving Goals include:

1. A systematic approach to planning to achieve operational goals;
2. The application of key performance indicators to achieve the alignment of responsibilities of senior management and published goals of the university;
3. The introduction of a university Quality Assurance Framework;
4. Careful formulation of the annual budget aligned with forward planning;
5. All divisions within the university formulate a Strategic Performance Plan;
6. Annual Strategic Performance Reviews of all divisions;
7. A systematic approach to evaluation, reporting and quality assurance that promotes both effectiveness and efficiency and avoids unnecessary duplication;
8. Clearly defined governance role for the Board of Trustees and its committees;
9. A strong emphasis on risk management and assignment of accountability for risk management.

This becomes the annual cycle of Performance and Risk Management with annual reviews of all departments and divisions occurring every April/May.
# Annual Performance Plan (example only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Risk Asses</th>
<th>Approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/14</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Introduce new MA</td>
<td>BDT</td>
<td>Yes; PVC</td>
<td>VC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Appoint 2 new Faculty</td>
<td>SL @ BDT</td>
<td>Yes; PVC</td>
<td>VC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/14</td>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>1. Electronic equipment 2. Books and journals 3. Furniture *</td>
<td>BDT</td>
<td>Yes; PVC</td>
<td>VC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Itemize faculty research projects **</td>
<td>BDT</td>
<td>Yes/ DAD</td>
<td>VC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/14</td>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td>4 Faculty to attend national conference 1 attend an international conference</td>
<td>BDT</td>
<td>Yes/VC</td>
<td>VC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/14</td>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>Organize 3 round tables, 2 workshops, 1 seminar ***</td>
<td>BDT</td>
<td>Yes/PVC</td>
<td>VC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/14</td>
<td>Publishing</td>
<td>Journal 2 Book****</td>
<td>BDT</td>
<td>Yes/VC</td>
<td>VC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BDT</td>
<td>Yes/VC</td>
<td>PVC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See Attachment 1
** Debited to University Research Budgets for Departments; actual costs for Research Centers
*** Details Attachment 2
**** Details Attachment 3